DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 160 982 CG 012 889

AUTHOR Richmond, Lee J.
TITLE Professional Development and Personality in Religious Clergy.
PUB DATE Mar 78
NOTE 11p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Career Choice; *Church Workers; *Clergymen; *Decision Making; *Motivation; Need Gratification; Occupational Choice; Personality; *Psychological Needs; Religion; Research Projects; Stress Variables

ABSTRACT

Recent studies indicate that achievement, deference and abasement affect career decision making. Conflicts occur between the need to achieve and the need to defer, and are exacerbated in persons who experience high abasement needs. When religious and clergy have conflicts between need to achieve in career areas and need to defer, the effect is frequently a generalized lethargy and malaise. Emphasis is placed on the psychological importance of individual self-directed, effective career decision making and action. Motivational techniques related to finding what one wants in life, and strength recognitional techniques relating to utilizing options and doing what one wants in life, are explored. Implications for religious and clergy are discussed. (Author)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

LJ Richmond

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

ED160942

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PERSONALITY IN RELIGIOUS AND CLERGY

In 1975 I was employed as a private consultant to survey the need for counseling and psychological services among Roman Catholic Clergy and Religious in an East Coast city with a population of approximately a million persons. Forty-four communities of women were contacted with a sixty-six percent return. Twenty-eight percent of the women who answered the survey stated a need for career and vocational counseling. Forty-five percent indicated a need for personality assessment.

Fifteen communities of men were querried with an eight percent return. Of these, forty percent reported a need for vocational and career counseling, and forty-two percent reported a need for personality assessment.

It is interesting to note when the same survey queried psychologists and psychiatrists, with a forty-five percent return, they reported seeing enough persons in therapy to estimate a minimum expenditure of $300,000.00 annually for counseling services.

These figures intrigue me because in my private psychological practice with women religious I have found many persons suffering from anxiety and depressive symptoms that could be directly traced to discomfort within work situations. I have also found that this discomfort often produces guilt.

Religious, many of whom believe that they should work willingly and cheerfully whatever the task and however ill they may be suited to it, give very little consideration to the psychological states

CG012889

generally incurred when one works at a task where there is low motivation, little interest, variable inclination, and in many instances no personal choice. What then happens to such persons is a kind of general malaise, attributed to unknown origin.

I have no doubt that this also occurs in men, but I can clinically and experimentally attest to it in women. Many high achieving women suffer conflicts between their need to achieve and their need to defer. (Richmond, 1972.) The literature attests that conflicts between the need to achieve and the need to defer are exacerbated in persons who experience high abasement needs. Religious frequently fall in this category. Because there is no way to resolve these conflicting needs within present community structure, generalized lethargy and malaise are a more common result than often recognized.

During the month of January, 1978, I was privileged to participate in a four day workshop sponsored by the Religious Formation Conference. Entitled "A Season For Becoming", held in Washington, D.C. and focused on adult development in and through religious life, this workshop drew a number of participants from across the U.S. who were major superiors and on-going formation directors of their communities. My particular responsibility was to highlight the role of career development in adult development and of individual action in healthy career decision making.

I began my part of the workshop by administering Miller's "Life-Career Checkup" - a motivational set of questions that lead a person to awareness of feelings about job, about one's reality, energy and capabilities, and about how one's life is working (Miller, 1977).

Although this 23 item check list is set up on a five point scale, (1=very good, 2=moderately good, 3=so-so, 4=unhappy, 5=very unhappy) the religious answered it as though it were a four point scale, leaving off the lowest scored number, 5. This type of answering was indicative of a pollyanna type character for the group.

The mean age of the 27 persons under study was 42 years. The population could be said to have reported feeling moderately good about their work, its challenge, their impact and their chance to grow on the job. However, when the 27 persons, age range 30-63, were divided into three respective age groups, 30-34 (15%) 35-49 (59%) and 50+ (26%) there were some interesting differences between the groups. (See Table 1). The 50+ group found their work the most challenging and reported most positively in feeling that their work gives them much chance to grow. They report the highest energy level of the three age groups.

In contrast, the 35-49 age group reported having the most impact on the results of their job but reported the lowest energy level. The youngest group reported experiencing the greatest challenge on their job and the most freedom to direct it.

On the whole the lowest mean scores for the entire group were in energy level, ($\bar{x}$=2.78), motivation for work, ($\bar{x}$=2.41), ability for stress management and relaxation, ($\bar{x}$=2.48), goal setting, ($\bar{x}$=2.44), and goal attainment, ($\bar{x}$=2.33), while the mean average for the twenty-three questions was 2.0. It is interesting to note that the item on salary satisfaction scores exactly at the mean. (See Table 1.)

Table 1

Miller's Life-Career Checkup (Mean Scores)

Item	N=27 Group Mean	N=4 (16%) Age 30-34 Mean	N=16 (59%) Age 35-39 Mean	N=7 (26%) Age 50+ Mean
The kind of work you do	1.63	1.58	1.75	1.71
The challenge in your work	1.48	1.75	1.63	1.29
The freedom to direct your work	1.30	1.00	1.38	1.43
Your impact on results	1.78	1.75	1.69	2.43
Your rate of learning	1.74	1.75	1.94	1.57
Your chance to grow	1.67	1.50	1.81	1.43
The amount of money you make	2.07	2.00	2.00	1.14
My energy level	2.78	2.75	2.94	2.57
My knowledge in my field is	1.89	1.75	1.88	2.00
My skills are	2.26	2.25	2.13	2.00
My interests are	2.77	2.00	2.38	1.57
My vitality and zest for life is	2.00	2.00	1.94	1.71
My motivation for work is	2.41	2.50	2.50	2.29
My curiosity is	2.15	2.00	2.25	1.71
My knowledge of myself is	1.67	2.00	1.63	1.43
I am ____ at generating extra energy when needed	1.93	1.75	2.00	1.86
I am ____ at managing stress and relaxing	2.49	1.75	2.56	2.57
I am ____ at sleeping well and waking rested	1.96	2.50	2.00	2.14
I am ____ in my relations with others	2.11	2.00	2.06	2.14
I am ____ at creating a positive outlook toward my life	2.07	2.25	2.06	2.14
I am ____ at setting useful goals	2.44	2.50	2.50	2.57
I am ____ at achieving my goals	2.33	2.00	2.25	2.71
I am ____ at managing change in my life	2.15	2.25	2.00	2.43

The Sociability and Self Acceptance scales of the California Psychological Inventory were also administered to the same population by Sister Catherine Casey. The mean for this group on the Sociability scale was 23.65 and on the Self Acceptance scale 20.09. The range was from a low of Sy 22.0 and Sa 20.0 for those aged 30-34 years to a high of Sy 24.50 and Sa 24.08 for the 50+ age group. Female norms for the CPI are Sy 24.5 and Sa 20.0. (See Table 2.)

TABLE 2

CALIFORNIA PSYCHOLOGICAL INVENTORY

Mean Scores

Sy and Sa Scales

	Total Group N=23	Age 30-34 N=4	Age 35-49 N=13	Age 50+ N=6	Female Norms
Sy	23.65	22.0	23.46	24.50	24.5
Sa	20.09	20.0	20.23	24.08	20.0

The Vocational Preference Inventory and the Self Directed Search were also administered. SDS means clearly indicate the group as primarily SAE (social, artistic and enterprising). The VPI showed almost the same typology for the group. (See Table 3).

TABLE 3

SDS and VPI

Mean Scores

SDS	Mean	VPI Mean
R	7.45	2.03
I	9.52	1.88
A	12.52	3.91
S	18.11	3.81
E	11.25	2.23
C	9.76	1.25

The highest positive responses were on the following occupations: vocational counselor 84% (S), musician 75% (A), writer 63% (A), social science teacher 53% (S). The lowest responses were: credit investigator 3%, IBM equipment operator 4%, editor of scientific journal 6%.

It appears although religious superiors and formation directors who remain in orders over the life span are more self accepting and less isolated than younger peers, the group as a whole has the following characteristics. Somewhat pollyanna in character the group avoids extreme critical comment of life work and circumstance. Nevertheless, difficulty is reported in maintaining energy level, motivation stress management, goal setting and goal attainment.

Furthermore the group is quite homogenous in occupational type

indicating a tendency toward inbreeding. Are not people of all occupational types entitled to a Religious Vocation?

What religious and clergy must come to realize is that career development is an ongoing process of self development, and that we express our personalities in vocational choice. That is to say, we are attracted to occupations suitable to our personality (Holland, 1973).

Stress in a work situation occurs whenever there is a poor match between our capabilities and interests, and job requirements. It also occurs when the environment is unsuitable to our personality type. To alienate stress, people need to feel in control of their personal lives. Such control involves self-awareness, decision making powers, and the ability to set and reach personal goals.

Three hundred thousand dollars is a lot of money to spend for psychotherapy, especially when the persons for which it is being spent are basically healthy. If we define health not as the absence of illness or defect, but rather a condition in which we recover rapidly and easily, and if we relate health to success and happiness, I think psychotherapists would hardly be surprised to see how healthy our Religious clients would be if they were given real control over their own destinies.

As counselors and therapists we have a moral responsibility in this, I think, for we know the psychological importance of individual, self-directed, effective career decision making and action. We know that in addition to selfawareness and skills identification persons need career awareness, decision making skills, goal setting, and job finding skills. And we also know that these skills can be taught.

But we are caught in a double bind, in that it makes no sense to teach skills to persons when there is no real opportunity for their use. Perhaps our target must then be the Religious Communities themselves, and our goal to act as external change agents. Religious, after all, are people, healthiest whey they, like us, can be in control of their destinies.

There is for instance, no reason why one can not be a Religious and a refrigerator repair person or a travel agent. Income generated could surely help communities, if income saved on therapy were itself not sufficient to justify the change. But such thinking, however sensible, requires radical change not only for communities but for psychologists and counselors. For communities, the change mission involves interest in and public commitment to the psychological as well as spiritual development of the persons who comprise the community. For therapists the switch is from reactive counseling to pro-active psychoeducational consulting and change agentry.

We are needed to assist religious and clergy in self-awareness, interpersonal processes, and decision making processes as they relate to career development, but we are also needed to assist communities to make it possible for persons to make the real choices that effect their lives.

Some years ago when I was doing a practicum at Johns Hopkins Hospital, Dr. Alejandro Rodriguez, a chairperson of the division of Pediatric Psychiatry (and, I think a practicing Catholic) asked me in a supervision session if I knew the meaning of the words from the Lord's prayer, "Lead us not into temptation". "I guess," I said,

"they mean, lead us not into sin". "No," he said, "as a counselor you should know that what is being said is "Lord keep me from getting into a situation where I don't have control'". It's time for counselors to examine with religious orders why they are allowing themselves to be in such a situation. It is also time to begin to examine with persons who live in religious communities their desire and ability to challenge the status quo.

REFERENCES

Holland, J.L., Making Vocational Choices: A Theory of Careers, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1973.

Miller, Donald B. Personal Vitality Workbook, Addison Wesley Publishing Company, Reading, Mass., 1977.

Richmond, Lee J. A Comparison of Returning Women and Regular College Age Women at a Community College (unpublished Dissertation), University of Maryland, 1972.